

**CLAIMS AMENDMENTS**

1. (currently amended) A thermal indicator for visually determining and monitoring temperature of cooking food, comprising:

a) a body having an orifice;

ab) indicating means capable of moving through the orifice relative to the body from a first position to a second position for indicating when a preselected temperature has been reached; and

bc) a thermopolymeric switching medium contained within the body for allowing said indicating means to dynamically indicate when said preselected temperature has been reached, wherein said thermopolymeric switching ~~means~~medium comprises at least one thermopolymeric material that, when at a temperature below the predetermined temperature, maintains said indicating means at the first position, and that, when at a temperature equal to or higher than the predetermined temperature, yields to permit release of said indicating means to the second position.

2. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the thermopolymeric switching medium is an organic polymer.

3. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising at least one inert additive selected from the group consisting of sugars, salts, starches, cellulose non-melting metal filings, powdered plastics, polymers, silicon, silicates, chromatography resins, ceramic resins, chalk, glass, sand, air, oils, water, and high boiling liquid polymeric materials, and combinations thereof.

4. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 0.1% to 99% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

5. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 5% to 95% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

6. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 10% to 90% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

7. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 20% to 80% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

8. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising at least one interactive additive selected from the group consisting of bee's wax, root extracts, long chain hydrocarbon analogs from the jojoba plant, petroleum distillation analogs, and synthetic organic analogs, and combinations thereof.

9. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the at least one interactive additive is selected from the group consisting of short and long chain alcohols, esters, acrylic esters, fluorinated hydrocarbons, docosanol (C22), tricosanol (C23), tetracosanol (C24), pentacosanol (C25), hexacosanol (C26), heptacosanol (C27), octacosanol (C28), nonacosanol (C29), triacontanol (C30) and extended analogs, and combinations thereof.

10. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 0.1% to 99% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

11. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 5% to 95% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

12. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 10% to 90% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

13. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 20% to 80% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

14. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising at least one emulsifier selected from the group consisting of lipids, long chain alcohols, lecithins, glycol lipids, quaternized amines with lipid tails, and charged ionic detergents, and combinations thereof.

15. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.001% to 10% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

16. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.01% to 5% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

17. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.1% to 1% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

18. (currently amended) A thermal indicator for visually determining and monitoring temperature of cooking food, comprising:

- a) a barrel having an orifice communicating with a cavity within said barrel, said barrel being adapted for insertion into the article to be monitored;
- b) an indicator disposed in said cavity and adapted for sliding travel therein between a retracted position indicating the food is in an uncooked state and an extended position indicating that the food is in a cooked state;
- c) means for resiliently biasing said indicator away from said retracted position and toward said extended position; and
- d) thermopolymeric switching medium for releasably retaining said indicator in said retracted position,

wherein said thermopolymeric switching medium, when at a temperature below the predetermined temperature, maintains said indicator in said retracted position, and when at a temperature equal to or higher than the predetermined temperature, yields to permit release of said indicator, said biasing means urging said plunger into said extended position for visual indication.

19. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 18, wherein the thermopolymeric switching medium is an organic polymer.

20. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 18, further comprising at least one inert additive selected from the group consisting of sugars, salts, starches, cellulose non-melting metal filings, powdered plastics, polymers, silicon, silicates, chromatography resins, ceramic resins, chalk, glass, sand, air, oils, water, and high boiling liquid polymeric materials, and combinations thereof.

21. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 0.1% to 99% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

22. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 5% to 95% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

23. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 10% to 90% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

24. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 20% to 80% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

25. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 18, further comprising at least one interactive additive selected from the group consisting of bee's wax, root extracts, long chain hydrocarbon analogs from the jojoba plant, petroleum distillation analogs, and synthetic organic analogs, and combinations thereof.

26. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the at least one interactive additive is selected from the group consisting of short and long chain alcohols, esters, acrylic esters, fluorinated hydrocarbons, docosanol (C22), tricosanol (C23), tetracosanol (C24), pentacosanol (C25), hexacosanol (C26), heptacosanol (C27), octacosanol (C28), nonacosanol (C29), triacontanol (C30) and extended analogs, and combinations thereof.

27. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 0.1% to 99% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

28. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 5% to 95% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

29. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 10% to 90% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

30. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 20% to 80% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

31. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 18, further comprising at least one emulsifier selected from the group consisting of lipids, long chain alcohols, lecithins, glycol lipids, quaternized amines with lipid tails, and charged ionic detergents, and combinations thereof.

32. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.001% to 10% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

33. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.01% to 5% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

34. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.1% to 1% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

35. (currently amended) A thermal indicator for visually determining and monitoring the temperature of cooking food products, comprising:

- a) a barrel having an orifice communicating with a cavity within said barrel, said barrel being adapted for insertion into the article to be monitored;
- b) an indicator disposed in said cavity and adapted for sliding travel therein between a retracted position indicating the food is in an uncooked state and an extended position indicating the food is in a cooked state;
- c) means for resiliently biasing said indicator away from said retracted position and toward said extended position; and
- d) organic thermopolymeric switching medium for releasably retaining said indicator in said retracted position,

wherein said thermopolymeric switching medium, when at a temperature below the predetermined temperature, maintains said indicator in said retracted position, and when at a temperature equal to or higher than the predetermined temperature, yields to permit release of said indicator, said biasing means urging said plunger into said extended position for visual indication.

36. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 35, further comprising at least one inert additive selected from the group consisting of sugars, salts, starches, cellulose non-melting metal filings, powdered plastics, polymers, silicon, silicates, chromatography resins, ceramic resins, chalk, glass, sand, air, oils, water, and high boiling liquid polymeric materials, and combinations thereof.

37. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 18, further comprising at least one interactive additive selected from the group consisting of bee's wax, root extracts, long chain hydrocarbon analogs from the jojoba plant, petroleum distillation analogs, and synthetic organic analogs, and combinations thereof.

38. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 37, further comprising at least one emulsifier selected from the group consisting of lipids, long chain alcohols, lecithins, glycol lipids, quaternized amines with lipid tails, and charged ionic detergents, and combinations thereof.

39. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 0.1% to 99% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium, the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 0.1% to 99% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium, and the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.001% to 10% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

40. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 39, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 5% to 95% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium, the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 5% to 95% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium, and the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.01% to 5% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

41. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 40, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 10% to 90% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium, the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 10% to 90% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium, and the at least one emulsifier is present in an amount between 0.1% to 1% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

42. (original) The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 41, wherein the inert additive is present in an amount between 20% to 80% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium and the at least one interactive additive is present in an amount between 20% to 80% by weight of thermopolymeric switching medium.

43. The thermal indicator as claimed in Claim 39, wherein the at least one interactive additive is selected from the group consisting of short and long chain alcohols, esters, acrylic esters, fluorinated hydrocarbons, docosanol (C22), tricosanol (C23), tetracosanol (C24), pentacosanol (C25), hexacosanol (C26), heptacosanol (C27), octacosanol (C28), nonacosanol (C29), triacontanol (C30) and extended analogs, and combinations thereof.